



Volume 23, Issue 1, Fall 2004

CONTENTS

Editorial	
Feeling Old? An Exchange Between Lee Spector and Ray Coppinger	3
David Talks About Cars, Ayn Rand, and Number Two	4
No, The Laundry Room is That Way	6
Being Politically Proactive	7
The Omen Loves You	8
Farewell Div I, Hello Uncertainty	9
K is for Karing: the Dennis Kucinich Story	10
Comic: Goofball Goofy Jane's in an Ear	11
	15

omen

Volume 23, issue 1
September 29, 2004

layout & editing

Abby Ohlheiser
Shalin Scupham
Nobody Else

gave up
made up
showed up

Come To Omen Layout
Because it's Fun!

Covers

Front: Kyle Strimbeck
Back: Shalin Scupham
"Cletus" images from Google image search
THE OFFICIAL OMEN HAiku:

 Views in the Omen (5)

Do not necessarily (7)

Reflect the staff's views (5)



And be sure to read our policy
box at the bottom of the next
page before submitting.

Visit the Omen's very simple
website at omen.hampshire.edu

If you can't say anything good
about someone, sit right here
by me.

by Abby Ohlheiser, Editor-in-Chief

I had an editorial for the first issue planned out about a week in advance – I was going to title it Frequently Unasked/Unanswered Questions (FUQ, pronounced Fuh-q). My answers were funny, and useful, and one referenced Star Trek, but then I had some sense knocked into me. If you have questions, look at the policy box located below or contact me.

The OMEN staff this year has shifted quite a bit; gone are our Div III regulars and our bitter, "way older" students. They have moved on to better things, real deadlines, and paying rent (or their parents' basement) while we younger staff members pick up the slack.

We are always open to new members. Writers, graphic designers, grammar nerds, bitter older students, impressionable first-years, or anybody interested in helping us get our publication out every two weeks can join by showing up to our Tuesday meetings, every Tuesday after the release of the issue at 9 PM in the Kiva. I will post a message on the Daily Jolt (www.hampshire.dailyljolt.edu) on the day of the meeting; if you're confused and don't feel like looking up my extension, check there.

Speaking of the Jolt, I have a bone to pick with ... Just kidding. My own opinion of the Jolt forum aside, I use the Jolt because 1) the previous OMEN editor did and 2) because more students use the Jolt. It's true, as good or as bad as that may be.

It is a common myth that the OMEN staff members and regular contributors are whiskey-drinking bastards who use this publication to voice their own dissatisfaction with Hampshire

The Omen is Hampshire's longest-running bi-weekly publication, established by Stephanie Cole in December of 1992. In the past, submissions have included students' perspectives on the campus, administration, news, movie reviews, commentary, short fiction, satire, first born, artwork, comics, and the occasional embarrassing self-promotion. Everything the Omen receives, provided it is sent from a member of the Hampshire community, will be published unless it is deemed libelous or defamatory. Although we find such things amusing and entertaining for countless hours, it is just not an option in this forum. Libel will be considered clearly false or unsupportable writing that maliciously damages a person's reputation.

The Omen will not edit anything you write

Editorial

College, activists, their own inability to communicate with other people, activists, and activism. That's just not true. While the OMEN certainly will publish the incoherent ravings of any staff member or regular contributor, this publication is just as eager (and obligated) to print ANY submission by ANY member of the Hampshire community, provided it follows our publication policy. Just write it down, put it in (or attach it to) an email, and click "send." We'll do the rest.

We won't assign you a topic or give you a "scoop", we won't send back your submission marked up with a red pen, and we won't judge you in public.

Shalin Scupham has written a nice article for this issue, a "what the OMEN means to me" essay. I'm trying to refrain from writing an editorial along similar lines because 1) I hate writing those kind of things and 2) I don't have strong feelings for the OMEN beyond my belief that an open forum magazine is beneficial to the Hampshire community. The OMEN is fun to make. Being a staff member has little perks such as contributing to the OMEN staff features (there are none this issue -- you'll see some later in the semester), and being able to submit articles past the 5pm deadline. Being a staff member also means attempting to remain invisible. I don't think anybody wants the OMEN to morph into one student's soapbox that happens to publish the opinions of other community members in between her ramblings. The editorial is boring. Don't read it. Read what everybody else has submitted. Consider writing something yourself.

policy

(except spelling and grammar). You must sign your real name (no anonymous submissions) and understand that you are responsible for what you say. Nonetheless, views in the Omen do not necessarily represent the views of anyone, anywhere, living or dead.

There is no Omen staff, save those positions of editor-in-chief and layout editor. To qualify for community service you must be a consistent contributor and help regularly with layout. Layout times (and such) will be discussed at our meetings. Meetings are held every Tuesday after release of an issue in the Kiva at 9PM. Everyone, everywhere, living or dead, should come.

The Omen loves you.



FEELING OLD?: AN EXCHANGE BETWEEN LEE SPECTOR AND RAY COPPINGER

Lee Spector wrote: Some perspective on the entering class, via Beloit, -Lee

Just in case you weren't feeling too old today, this will certainly change things. Each year the staff at Beloit College in Wisconsin puts together a list to try to give the faculty a sense of the mind set of this year's incoming freshmen. Here's this year's list:

The people who are starting college this fall across the nation were born in 1985.
 They are too young to remember the space shuttle blowing up.
 Their lifetime has always included AIDS.
 Bottle caps have always been screw off and plastic.
 The CD was introduced the year they were born.
 They have always had an answering machine.
 They have always had cable.
 They cannot fathom not having a remote control.
 Jay Leno has always been on the tonight show.
 Popcorn has always been cooked in the microwave.
 They never took a swim and thought about Jaws.
 They can't imagine what hard contact lenses are.
 They don't know who Mork was or where he was from.
 They never heard "where's the beef?" "I'd walk a mile for a Camel", or
 "de plane Boss de plane."
 They do not care who shot J.R. And have no idea who J.R. Even is.
 McDonald's never came in Styrofoam containers.
 They don't have a clue how to use a typewriter.
 Do you feel old yet? Pass this on to the other old fogies on your list.

Ray's response:

Lee's list of "guess what the new kids will be like (above) led me on a rambling streaming consciousness about the demise of Division I and the "new" tutorial way of teaching.

I'd add to his list things like:

This will be the first generation of kids who've never heard of a Division I exam (I bet I am the all-time record holder for the professor who chaired the most Division I exams— which is now a dubious distinction which becomes laughable at my next reappointment meeting).

But as I read the e-mail to Lee I realized that actually I have a lot in common with these new students. When you really are old, you start to have a lot more in common with the kids than you do with middle-agers. On reading the list I realized that one of the things that slowed me down in learning the computer was I couldn't type – typewriters weren't used by boys in my generation. And I never heard of JR or Mork either – probably TV stars, right?? (The Sheppards were the first people in my boyhood Boston neighborhood to get a TV and most of you don't remember life without it.)

In the 1970's I was amazed that my students didn't know which came first, Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War or Eisenhower and the Korean War (which for me was the most important of the wars). By the way, Cole Science Center's windows don't open because Eisenhower said that with nuclear power, electricity to heat and cool it was going to be too cheap to meter. Now the new students don't know Eisenhower defeated Adlai Stevenson who was Adele Smith Simmons' (whoever she was??) god-father or where Korea is. But that is OK because I don't know where the Belgium Congo is anymore.

Ten years ago the most populous city in the world was Sao Paulo and less than half of my World Food Crisis students knew where it was. Now less than half the Hampshire faculty knows that the World Food Crisis was a course, even an important course that specialized (as many courses did in those days) in teaching the seven learning skills. (I just went to a "how to teach a tutorial" session and found out that students should learn things like: critical learning, analysis, and project-based research, etc.) My older colleagues and I have been teaching these as part of course content ever since the College opened in 1970.

So there you have it – these entering students are in many ways just like us professors and other kinds of real people, in that they have had a unique cultural experience, probably multi-cultural, that separates them into a special category. The Beloit list of characteristics of this group has the sense that these kids are a little bit freaky. Because of their unique experience they are different. And because of those differences, because of their naïveté of our world (the real world of JR and Mork) we must treat them differently. They need to be monitored and they need special treatment with special methods in order that they stay with us long enough to become educated adults.

I learned in my session that these sub-adults need to be continuously monitored to see if they are making progress toward understanding what we think are the important things to know. In my session of "learning to teach tutorials", I learned that we professors need to "parent" these new students – watch them – check on them at least twice a week – keep tabs on their portfolio progress– report them if we sense something going wrong so they can be helped and rehabilitated.

I remember in 1970 telling a parent who objected to a co-educational dormitory that it was the students' domain, and we the faculty treated them as adults capable of making their own decisions on these matters. The early philosophy at Hampshire was they are adults and we were encouraged to study with them and treat them as respected colleagues.

What attracted me to Hampshire at its beginning was its emphasis on our establishment of a Community of Scholars. As such we and the students were equals despite our different cultural experiences. Hampshire was a very special teaching and learning place for its entire membership and students were not second-class citizens that needed policing and patrolling. Now I find myself the cop, both the good cop and the bad cop. I'm supposed to encourage, teach, advise and continuously judge. I'm supposed to catch the faults in these kids early, and report them to central intelligence, CASA. I love the name CASA. A house is not a home and a good teacher is not Big Brother. This generation of Hampshire students will never remember college life before the HUB. What could be more demeaning than that? Grades, I suppose.

Ray Coppingier
Professor of Biology

DAVID TALKS ABOUT CARS, AYN RAND, AND NUMBER TWO

Just how much can an AMD 1.05GHz Athalon Tbird with 672MB of off-brand memory on an ABIT KT7A-Raid board do? Run Ad-Aware SE, play Mudhoney's *Tomorrow Hit Today*, AIM, Norton Anti-Virus and Personal Firewall 2004, and MS Word XP, which is how much if you were wondering. We will draw from your continued reading that your intention was to know. Sure, it freezes a bit, but the sound isn't missing a beat, and I have bigger problems; in fact, I think we all do.

Automobiles. My Jetta is a thing of the past. It ran on vegetable oil, and got great mileage, but it was getting old. Of course, old is relative, but isn't everything, so we won't get drawn into a circular philosophical discussion about it, we'll just move on. On a side note, moveon.org used to be great, but just as everything old becomes new, everything will also eventually turn to crap and flood your email with mindless partisan drivel without issue. There comes a point when an automobile outives its economic usefulness. For the Jetta, it was at 252,756 miles.

The exhaust was rusting off, it needed struts (to stop it from bouncing after hitting a bump), the windshield was cracked, and I personally put 150,000 miles on the clutch. Fortunately, the car still looked like a million bucks (or a million broccoli, to put it vegetarian). So I put it on ebay. Some guy who had tons of dad's money and no common sense purchased it. He destroyed it within 24 hours.

There is now one less hybrid vehicle in the world. I bought another car, and the cycle begins again.

The funny thing about hybrids is that they pollute so much. The mileage is OK, but what is to be done with the battery, and how long will the car last? This remains to be seen. I also have a problem with cars that are designed to carry two passengers. Put the passenger behind the driver and you get a motorcycle with better mileage and less to recycle within ten years. We will see what the future of the novelty car market brings. At least there is hope though. Some of this hope goes unnoticed.

That reminds me of a book I read this summer: *Atlas Shrugged*, by Ayn Rand. I was a good read but there came a point when I cared less who John Galt was, and more that he get to the point or shut up. Also, while the buildup was great, the end was silly. It's odd how things work out sometimes. I have had views and ideas since I was very young which I believed no one else shared, and it is always startling to see similar views and ideas articulated by someone else. If you are bored some day, research deism and objectivism. Conservative, like liberal, is not always the right word, and rarely defines anything sufficiently enough to form an informed opinion. Go McCain.

If you are ever wondering what the average lifespan of a vehicle is, try giving your local garage a call. These days, under 150k miles is a good average life expectancy of the engine

Factoid (the modern and confused usage of the term): Rudolph Diesel (who disappeared off the side of a boat in 1913) originally designed the diesel engine and patented the device as a pressure ignited heat engine. Gasoline engines generally have spark plugs as an ignition source. Steam engines suck. Diesel invented his engine before there was Diesel fuel.

and transmission under normal conditions.

The decision to reveal my knowledge in technical areas is never made without some misgivings. The revelation that I am able to provide assistance in some of these areas generally leads to one of two scenarios.

1. (preferred) My audience (often of one) has a genuine interest in self-improvement, and sees it as an opportunity for the free exchange of knowledge. They are interested in taking the opportunity to help themselves become better guided in finding solutions to their issues. I am

happy to offer whatever information I have, subject to personal circumstances such as available time etc., with the implied caveat that the knowledge is subject to the failures of my own understanding and perspective.

2. My audience (often of one) is only interested in solving their immediate problem, and seeks to make it my problem by pursuing commitments from me. I don't like it when someone tries to guilt me into doing something.

I am sure I have been guilty of number 2 at times. The thing about number 2 is that it places

a person in a compromised position, where an even exchange cannot take place. Number 2 stinks, and I believe the scenario has wider implications. It's improper to initiate number 2 without consent, yet with number 2 there can be no free will consent, because if there is, an even exchange has occurred, and number 2 has not.

To each member of the incoming students:

We accept you,
one of us!... -Freaks
(1932)



by Wesley Freeman

NO, THE LAUNDRY ROOM IS THAT WAY...

When I tell most people I live in the basement, I typically get one of two responses: either a very confused expression accompanied by the question "do you even have a window?" or an expression of enthusiasm tacked on to an outburst along the lines of "ohmygodthat'ssocool!!!!!!" The basement, contrary to popular myth, does in fact have windows, and really is a very entertaining place to live. Personally, I think that, with the exception of a very small number of mods, the C basement is quite possibly the best kept residential secret of Hampshire. Where else can you hear a bagpiper practicing in his room on one side of you, and quotes like "It's this season's shark cartilage enamel" and "Oh no! Now I'll need a fake ID to rent ultra porn!" coming from your intern's *Futurama* DVDs, playing in the room on the other side? Sure, you get disoriented first years, lost in their attempts to find the wily and secretive

laundry room, and the occasional inebriated party group who takes a wrong turn in their wayward journey in search of more booze, but as a whole, we really tend to enjoy our little half-story. Sequestered off into our own little fortresses of solitude, we are free to do as we please, without having to worry about perplexing or inconveniencing our hallmates, as there are only 3 unless you count the multiple personalities. Marathon sessions of *Fullmetal Alchemist* and *Futurama* with Colin, discussions about bagpiping with "Other Colin", and debates over the merits of Harry Potter with Sarah are just the first stop on the train of amusement that makes hourly stops throughout the basement.

I used to live on a hall where the members were carefully selected by a committee of current or former hallmates. You may know it as G2. I lived there for a year, after escaping the "turd in the shower" inci-



Redsneakers Journalism

BEING POLITICALLY PROACTIVE

There are many things I sing bagels, croissants, video games, porn, and other goods cannot understand in this world. Being assertive in public about your political opinions is one of many things I simply do not understand. An ex of mine is the most vocal anti-Republican I know, and I always read her rants with a smile; I often think, how many terrorists used to be "Aww, how cute, she's enacting social change again!" Sadly, I do not buy into social change or activism very much. I fail to see how obstructing traffic and causing me to wait four hours to cross a goddamn bridge enlightens the masses. "Holy Crap, Bush is a BAD president? Now I feel bad for voting in a manner I believed in four years ago?" That statement, I'm sorry, will NEVER be uttered. Nobody changes their minds so quickly, or on such a polar level. I think political activism is cute, and a good thing. Free Speech is terribly important, right? I mean, that's half the purpose of The OMEN right there.

It may be pretty sad, but I hate activists like I hate terrorists, only less. Think about it – I am stuck for hours trying to go buy a bagel or something because four city blocks are choked with people enacting their constitutional missive to complain. A mere four days earlier, while trying to purchase a similar breakfast food (perhaps a croissant), I am stopped by lines of cops checking cars for terrorists. Does anyone else see a similarity here? I see two. Similarity #1: You fuckers are keeping me from purchas-

my previous position as New Jersey state Senator. Toast a Bagel, spread cream cheese on it, and top with egg, potatoes, oregano, sausage or bacon. A breakfast to wake up for, time and time again! Or perhaps the Ultimate Cheesburger? Make your own! Add ANYTHING to your sandwich! Under my rule, people will be free to consume whatever manner of sandwich your sick sick minds can divine. Tuna fish and applesause? Go for it! Carrots, beets, and spam on Rye? You have the blessings of the state. Broiled lobster with truffles and EZCheez? You are legally permitted to eat it! Also, I promise that there will be no laws made to prohibit eating sandwiches while driving, or swimming, or skydiving. None of the other candidates have the balls to make THAT kind of promise, I assure you.

Remember, it's your country. History will remember your decision.



Vote Sandwich
Party in 2004!

Has everyone on campus tried the Gourmet Amazing? It is a sandwich I used to win

THE OMEN LOVES YOU & YOU & YOU

The Omen might, at some point, strike you as an offensive publication.

It might also seem funny. It might be stupid. It's kind of hard to tell what any given issue is going to be like until it's published, because we have no standards, and will print anything we're given, like wide-eyed laborador retrievers who sit, waiting, waiting behind our computers, just waiting in our little rooms and checking our e-mail every six seconds to proof-read and lay out your article. We wait with bated breath for your 1000 words of wisdom about hamburgers or student governance or your comics or why you like birds or laughing about that time you got naked in lemelson and made an ass of yourself.

All of these are acceptable topics, and I think most of them have been published before. The reason The Omen is awesome is that it has all the no-standards spontaneity of like an internet forum, but it has the benefit of being proof-read for really bad spelling, grammar and punctuation. And what that means is that sometimes really offensive stuff gets published. Like rape-fantasies and potentially racist speech.

You know what? That is okay. There is nothing keeping you from writing an intelligent, well-reasoned response to any of the drek that the editorial staff holds their nose and publishes, and there is nothing to keep you from publishing your own beautiful work of tolerance, virtue, and non-rape related sexual

fantasies.

All sorts of sexual fantasies are fine. Sexual fantasies about midgets. Sexual fantasies about giant women, seventeen feet tall, with Mickey mouse ears and tremendous thundering thighs.

The only conditions that need to be met for us to print your article are that is can't be libelous or unsigned. Because The Omen is not a censorship committee, we will not try and determine if something is offensive or not. I am personally offended by many things, such as the musical group Yo La Tengo, poor spelling, acne, poems about sunshine, and more. On the other hand, topics such as bestiality and how much a given author hates minorities are awesome conversation pieces in my book. No individual can predict what articles will raise a shit storm, and I think that exposure to texts that you don't like is good for you.

You see, when you surround yourself with liberals and progressives and activists and dreamers and people who kill themselves for their creative output, you forget that most people are not like that. I think the reason that Hampshire frustrates me so much is that people forget that there is a real world out there, and that in the real world, life is difficult. Spending the summer South of the Mason-Dixon line, I was constantly shocked by casual racism and homophobia and really horribly uninformed Republicans who really rally like Bush and so forth. I think that the most distressing trend in America today is the lack of

civil discourse on issues that are vital to our future, and communities are becoming increasingly unified on their politics; that is, there is no debate, none of the energy that comes from spirited disagreement.

The tendency of us good liberal kids is to make friends with other good liberal kids, hence ignoring the conservatives and talking about nothing except how right we are. My hypothesis is that this sort of insularity is very dangerous and ultimately destructive to anybody who really cares about liberalism, justice, effective media, multiculturalism, education, or democracy. This echo-chamber effect is offensive, dangerous, and leaves us pitifully under-prepared to become active, engaged citizens in a big, complex, fucked up, beautiful, diverse, bizarre world.

I think that the key to a healthy community of ideas (read: college) is open discourse. That is the role of the Omen. The Omen has no agenda, no bias, it's just a bunch of articles that people wrote of their own volition because they wanted to. That is the core of what makes Hampshire great for those with initiative.

There is nothing stopping you, dear reader, from starting a club and bringing speakers to Hampshire with FiCom funds to advance the cause of your choice. There is nothing stopping you from writing twenty pages of feminist or pro-minority or communist or nazi or pro-abortion-for-everybody or

continued on page 14

FAREWELL DIV I, HELLO UNCERTAINTY

As my duty as one of the most focused and well organized students with foresight on the Hampshire campus I have already finished my Division I and am in that horrible limbo before Div II where people ask you what div you are and you reply "I am currently without Division." It sounds as uncertain as it is. Especially in my case. You see, I am in the same SOL rowboat as many other second years here at this amazing young private school. I am financially fucked. This means for me that my future as far as this Spring is concerned is on very shaky ground. But, Hampshire is about finding alternatives, doing things in a different way when the system doesn't work for you right? Div I was a piece of cake, which I find regretful because it felt like high-school, of which I had four years. Now I find myself faced with a semester of field study or massive debt, and wondering if I'm even prepared for it. What did Div I give me anyway? I took some classes, I bugged a few professors for my late evals (wait, didn't teachers used to have to bother us for our late work in high-school?), and I handed in a portfolio in progress at the end of the year, finishing it the first day of classes this fall. By Hampshire's standards I'm excelling, and it was easy as hell. I did have to work harder than ever before in a few of my classes, and it was fulfilling in those isolated pockets of my education. But I hear stories about "the good old days" before the new Div I system when students REALLY had to take charge of their own education, not just follow the lines their advisor set.

I don't feel lucky that things were so easy for me, despite the work I did in individual classes, those are the only ones I feel I learned anything in. Isn't college supposed to teach us to cut our career path where we want it? How can we learn that without ever having to do it in this controlled, feedback rich atmosphere of college? I know I'll get it in my Div II, I set it up that way (which, simply being able to create my life from these classes and experiences guided by my committee rocks by the way). Unfortunately, I don't feel that Div I did what Hampshire administration wanted. It didn't prepare me for the work I have ahead of me in my Div II. I know what I'm supposed to do because I've worked my ass off to find out, but I still feel that Div I didn't offer me the skills I'll need for the rest of my Camp Hamp experience. My advisor wasn't a very big help, but, unlike so many other first years, I found another professor who was a big help (thank you Bill Brand). I suppose this rant may be pointless, especially since I've been so busy putting together my Div II so my future isn't so dangerously unclear for me and my parents to get involved with the re-radicalization process, or community council, or any of that stuff. But if you feel you could be getting more out of your education, you should do something about it. I've found you get out of your education what you put into it; I'd like to see Hampshire let us put more into it.

by Leila Higgins

SECTION HATE

We hate so
you don't
have to.

THE K IS FOR KARING: THE DENNIS KUCINICH STORY

Stage Left is dark while *Stage right* is a small café with a rainforest theme. The backdrop is a wall painted to look like a forest scene with (painted) windows showing a factory emitting smoke in the distance, forming a striking juxtaposition. A sign on the wall reads "Welcome to The Earthly Paradise" as elevator music plays quietly in the background. **KUCINICH** and **TESS** sit at opposite ends of a circular metal table.

KUCINICH: So, what made you enter my "Who Wants to be a First Lady?" contest?

TESS: Well, I've always been a huge fan, so I jumped at the chance to actually meet you in person. Besides, you're kind of cute.

KUCINICH: You're kidding, right?

TESS: Well, yes actually, but I'm open-minded.

KUCINICH: That's good.

Enter waiter (OTIS) from stage left.

OTIS: Hello, my name is Otis, and I'll be your waiter this evening. Can I get you something to drink?

TESS: I'll just have water, thanks.

KUCINICH: Is your coffee made from organically grown beans?

OTIS ... Um, I'm not sure (hesitantly) I can check if you want.

KUCINICH: Please do

Exit OTIS stage left.

TESS: So, um... I guess you really care a lot about the environment.

KUCINICH: Protection of the global environment is fundamental to preserving the life of all species. I have been honored by Public Citizen, the Sierra Club, Friends of the Earth and the League of Conservation Voters as a champion of clean air, clean water and an unspoiled earth. I was an early critic of nuclear power as being risky economically and environmentally, raising questions about nuclear waste byproducts. As a state senator I raised so many questions about a planned siting of a nuclear waste dump in Ohio that the idea was eventually scrapped. Early in my first term in Congress I thwarted an effort to repeal a provision of the Clean Air Act. As a congressional representative to the global climate treaty talks, I encouraged America to lead the way toward a sustainable, shared stewardship of the planet through carbon reduction, and investment in alternative...

Enter OTIS from stage left.

OTIS: I checked on the coffee sir, and it just so happens that

SECTION LIES

FICTION, POETRY,
SATIRE, AND
OTHER STUFF

by Daniel Griffin

it is organic.

KUCINICH: Is it shade-grown? Non-shade-grown coffee contributes to the destruction of the rain-forest.

OTIS: ... Um, I'm not sure. (*hesitantly*) I can check if you want.

KUCINICH: Please do.

Exit OTIS stage left.

TESS: So... Tell me about yourself. What made you the person you are today?

KUCINICH: I am who I am because of who I was. The child is the father of the man. I am the sum total of all my experiences.

Stage Right goes dark as Stage Left is slowly illuminated. The elevator music stops and is replaced by a recording of crickets chirping. The light comes from a light shining through holes in a piece of black velvet stretched across the back of the stage, giving the impression of stars. Painted on a piece of plywood and outlined against the stars is a steel foundry. In the middle of stage left is a cardboard cutout/plywood standup of a parked station-wagon.

VOICE 1 (male child, unseen): Hey, get you legs off me!

VOICE 2 (male child, unseen): But I can't bend my legs. Mom!

VOICE 3 (female child, unseen): I'm cold. Could you roll the window up please?

VOICE 4 (male child, unseen): It's hot in here besides it smells.

VOICE 5 (female child, unseen): The smell from that factory is

giving me a headache.

VOICE 1 (unseen): Hey, get your feet out of my face!

VOICE 6 (female adult, unseen, near-hysterical): Please! Just quiet down and sleep!

Pause, and then sobbing

VOICE 7 (male child, unseen): It's gonna to be alright mom.

VOICE 8 (male child, unseen): You can use my coat, Susan.

VOICE 3 (unseen): Thanks.

Pause, sobbing continues

VOICE 7 (unseen): Does anyone mind if I turn on the radio?

Silence, followed by quiet clicking sound. The cricket noises are replaced by The Beatles' "Yesterday."

VOICE 3 (unseen): I'm hungry.

Music and light fades as light is restored at Stage Right

KUCINICH: That childhood actually prepared me for just about anything. It was a gift that remains as a great source of strength today, and a gift of compassion for understanding the kind of stuff that people can go through.**

Enter OTIS from stage left.

OTIS: Well, I had to go to the grower's web-site, but it turns out that the coffee is shade-grown. Should I get you some?

KUCINICH: Do you have soy milk to put in it? Milk is a violation of animal rights, and non-dairy creamers are full of chemicals.

OTIS: ... Um, I'm not sure. (*hesitantly*) I can check if you want.

KUCINICH: Please do.

Exit OTIS stage left.

TESS: So what happened after that? Did things get better?

KUCINICH: We stayed in a total of twenty-one places before I turned seventeen. Apartments kept evicting us because there were so many of us. My dad was a truck-driver and wasn't there most of the time. My mom finally couldn't take care of us all and we had to go to an orphanage. We left on Thanksgiving. Nobody should have to go though what I did, not in a society with more than enough to go around. (with barely suppressed anger) I'm going to make it so that nobody has to.

TESS: (*showing heightened interest*) Really? How?

KUCINICH: First of all, by making sure that everyone has access to a good education; it should be a constitutional right! If everyone had an equal chance starting out, then there wouldn't be so many people in that position to start with. (*short pause, then continued lower*) I had to work three jobs just to go to a decent high-school.

Stage Right goes dark as Stage Left is again slowly illuminated, this time by a single overhead light (note: it is important that this light can be dimmed). Where the station wagon cutout was there is now a tread-mill, and the steel-foundry has been replaced by cutout of a generic red-brick building. It is important that there be a door in the building

be big enough for a man to walk though, but also small enough not to completely obstruct the black velvet backdrop. Over the door there is a sign hanging that reads "Down and Out Apartments" The elevator music stops. As the light reaches early-morning level, a young Kucinich (this should not be the same actor) steps out of the building and onto the treadmill. As he does, The Vogue's "Five O'Clock World" begins to play.

*Up every mornin' just to keep a job
I gotta' fight my way through the hustling mob
Sounds of the city poundin' in my brain
While another day goes down the drain*

*But its a five o'clock world when the whistle blows
No one owns a piece of my time
In the shelter of her arms everything's OK*

As the music plays and Kucinich walks on the treadmill, a person dressed like a construction worker walks in from stage left and replaces the sign with another of the same dimensions that says "Beechmont Country Club," and then exits the way he came. At the line "No one owns a piece of my time," Kucinich exits the treadmill and walks into the building.

*And there's a five o'clock me inside my clothes
Thinkin' that the world looks fine, yeah*

*Tadin' my time for the pay I get
Livin' on money that I ain't made yet
I've been goin' tryin' to make my way
While I live for the end of the day*

Cuz its a five o'clock world when the whistle blows
No one owns a piece of my time, and...

At the line "Tadin' my time for the pay I get" he re-emerges and re-mounts the treadmill. Once on it, he walks slightly slower than last time, with an over-all drooper countenance. The same construction worker as before comes out and again switches the signs, this time with one that says "St. Alexis Hospital." By this time the light should have reached maximum intensity. It should stay that way for now.

*There's a long-haired girl who waits, I know
To ease my troubled mind, yeah
oh my lady, yeah
oh my lady, yeah
In the shelter of her arms everything's OK*

Kucinich again enters the building at the line "No one owns a piece of my time," and re-emerges at the line "In the shelter of her arms everything's OK." After he mounts the treadmill, the sign is again switched, this time to one that reads "The Cleveland Plain Dealer." He walks slower still this time, and looks depressed. The light should begin to dim very slowly after the line "To ease my troubled mind."

*When she talks then the world goes slippin' away
And I know the reason I can still go on*

*When every other reason is gone,
In my five o'clock world she waits for me
Nothing else matters at all*

Cuz every time my baby smiles at me
I know that's its all worthwhile,
yeah oh my lady,
yeah oh my lady, yeah, fade.....

Kucinich again enters the building at the line "No one owns a piece of my time," and re-emerges for the final time at the line "I know that's its all worthwhile." The light should be fairly dim by the time that he re-emerges. Kucinich mounts the treadmill again and continues to walk (very slowly) as the music and lights fade. After the light has faded completely, the light behind the velvet backdrop should be turned on, so that as the light fades the stars become gradually visible. As the music fades completely, the cricket sound used before replaces it, until slowly it too (and the stars) fades out, as simultaneously stage right is re-illuminated.

KUCINICH: Suffice to say that I worked a lot, because I had to. I developed the will and tenacity and resolve that keeps me in the fight today because I had no other choice. I knew that in order to stand up for the little guy you have to first not be a little guy yourself. (brief pause) ... and obviously I mean that in a figurative, not a literal sense.

Enter OTIS (panting) from stage left.

OTIS: Well, I had to run to the store across the street, but I got some Soy Dream®.

KUCINICH: Thanks. Now where's the coffee?

OTIS: But you never ordered the coffee.

KUCINICH: (with increasing irritation) Well I'm ordering it now.

TESS: And I ordered water a long time ago.

Exit OTIS stage left.

TESS: So what did you do after High-School?

KUCINICH: Well, I went to college. I still had to work really hard, but in my free time I found new ways to unwind.

Stage Right goes dark as Stage Left is slowly illuminated (by the light behind the backdrop; if additional light is needed to see the stage, a single dim, fluorescent bulb can be used overhead). Where the treadmill was before, there is now a cutout of a tie-dyed VW van. The elevator music stops and is replaced by Tom Petty's "Roll Another Joint" (the volume should be loud for the initial harmonica solo, but can

drop off after the vocals begin, if it's necessary to hear the dialogue.) Sitting on the ground near the van are YOUNG KUCINICH, FRIEND 1, and FRIEND 2, all dressed in tie-dye and wearing an assortment of jewelry made from beads and hemp. As the song begins, FRIEND 1 lights a joint (a convincing mock-up can be made from a coffee filter and any shredded, flammable, non-carcinogenic material [i.e. tea or oregano], and, if desired, a marijuana-like smell can be produced by burning certain incenses off-set).

YOUNG KUCINICH: Whoooa... the stars are so... whoa...

FRIEND 2: (standing, staring at his foot) Whoa man... I think my foot is crying...

FRIEND 1: Dude... how many shrooms did you do?

YOUNG KUCINICH: Man,

mellow out. Yer' harshin' my buzz.

FRIEND 2: (looking up suddenly) Ah man... it's that leprechaun again...

FRIEND 1: (passing joint to YOUNG KUCINICH) Dude, yer' totally trippin'.

All laugh as lights and music fade, and lights are restored to stage right.

KUCINICH: There's no real reason that alcohol is legal and marijuana isn't. It's just a cultural convention.

Pause. TESS drums her fingers on the table.

KUCINICH: Man, the service is terrible here.

TESS: I know. We've been here a half hour and we don't even have our drinks yet.

KUCINICH: You wanna just go?

TESS: ...sure, why not? At this rate we'll be here all week.

Exit KUCINICH and TESS. Pause. Enter OTIS with tray containing coffee, soy milk, and water.

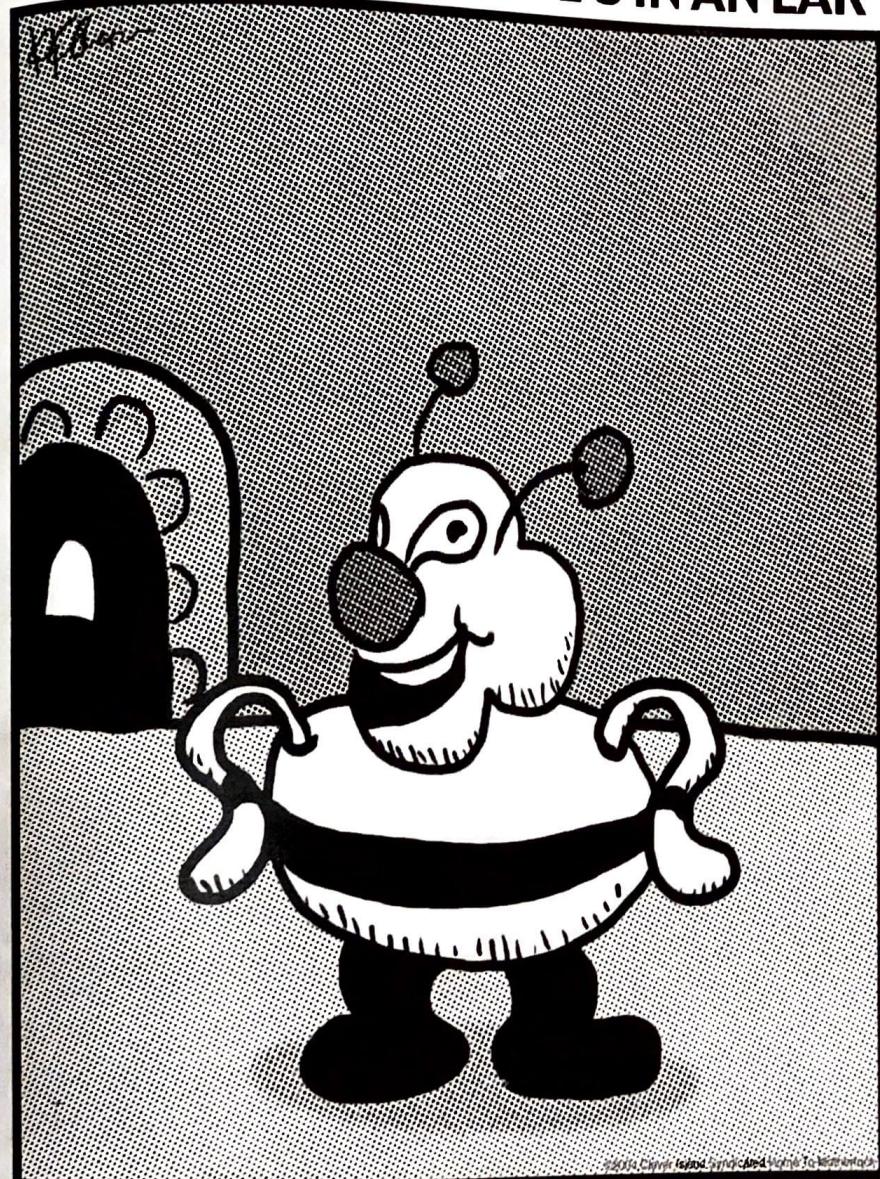
OTIS: Sorry that took so long. I had to make a new pot... (he sees that they're gone) What the...

OTIS sets the tray on the table and sits down looking exasperated. He then takes a flask out of a hip pocket and empties its contents into the cup of coffee. He drinks the coffee as the lights dim and are extinguished.



GOOFBALL GOOFY JANE'S IN AN EAR

BY KYLE STRIMBERGER



"Destroy my prick!"

